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A HISTORY OF INDIANA

FROM ITS EXPLORATION TO 1850

BY

LOGAN ESAREY, Ph.D.,

Instructor in Western History in Indiana University

Following are the opinions of the leading American historical reviews together with a few local notices. A new edition will appear this fall.

AMERICAN HISTORICAL REVIEW

The history of Indiana as one of the frontier States is suggestive of the distinctive part which the frontier has played in the warp and woof of American history. An added appreciation of the history of Indiana will give a new appreciation of our nation's development, particularly as the one hundredth year of her history coincides with the great national era.

In his preface, Mr. Esarey points out the difficulties which one now meets in investigating the historical data concerning Indiana, and he states that he has traced his facts to primary sources and has excluded from his book many traditional stories popularly regarded as substantial history, but which have been found to be without historical foundation.

The style of the author is clear and distinct, but somewhat heavy. The emphasis is well placed and the subjects are treated with due proportion. The institutional history is well covered topically and the chapters are subdivided in a way to show the connection with the general subject.

The author has used a great deal of original material but has interpreted it in his own language. He treats the old traditions sympathetically, but shows that they are largely false, and that the facts do not warrant many of the conclusions which the people have made. The subject-matter is interspersed with many anecdotes which add interest. While the discussion lacks detail yet it is accurate.

One of the commendable features is the foot-notes, and the author has given a brief estimate of the relative value of his authorities which is quite worth while. Another very attractive feature of the book is the collection of fifteen maps illustrating the development of the State to 1852. There is a good summary of the civil institutions of the State. The volume is provided with a good bibliography of twelve pages, altho it might to advantage have been made more complete. The index could have been improved upon.

All in all, Mr. Esarey has made a distinct contribution to the history of Indiana, and in so doing to the history of the nation, and one may hope that he will carry forward the work to a more recent time.

The American Historical Review, October, 1915. Pages 164-166.

CATHOLIC HISTORICAL REVIEW

Few persons in Indiana are better equipped to write a history of Indiana than Dr. Logan Esarey, Instructor in Western History in Indiana University, and editor-in-chief of the *Indiana Magazine of History*. In this State, as in so many others of the Union, the materials for history are only now being gathered together. We can therefore appreciate the labors necessary to write a historical narrative like this, critically correct. In his work, Dr. Esarey has succeeded admirably well in spite of the fact that serious obstacles presented themselves at every turn. From the first page of the book to the last, the interest of the reader is sustained. The opening chapter, dealing with the activities of the French in Indiana, presents many revelations to the student of history. In his researches on this early period Dr. Esarey depends to a large extent upon facts drawn from the *Jesuit Relations*, and he has interpreted and marshalled his data in a convincing and scholarly manner. When he writes about Clark's conquest and Pierre Gibault's part in the winning of the West, he tells the story very succinctly, perhaps too much so. In justice to the patriot-priest, he should have given him most of the credit. John Law, in his *Address on Vincennes*, says, "Next to Clark and Vigo, the United States are indebted more to Father Gibault for the accession of the States comprised in what was the original Northwest Territory than to any other man." The first place of honor is undoubtedly due to Father Gibault.

... The work bears the stamp of true scholarship. The scope of the book, embracing as it does the political, social and economic developments in the State, forbade a larger space to religious and educational history. The author's method of treatment is topical, and hence this book ought to form a convenient reference work for the student of American History.

The Catholic Historical Review, October, 1915, pp. 340-342.

IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS

It is perhaps no exaggeration to say that this is the most scholarly and

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The Catholic Historical Review, October, 1915, pp. 340-342.

IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS

It is perhaps no exaggeration to say that this is the most scholarly and satisfactory volume on the history of Indiana that has thus far been written. Not only is it more complete than any previous work attempting to cover the same period, but it is compiled almost entirely from original sources—a task of no mean proportions in a State where, as the author indicates in his preface, “there is no considerable collection of historical material to draw upon.”

A bibliography and a fairly good index complete the volume, which is handsomely printed and bound. Some persons will no doubt wish that the history had been carried down to a much later date. Dr. Esarey would render a real service, not only to the people of Indiana but to students of history throughout the Upper Mississippi Valley, if he would follow his present book with another volume covering the history of that State during the last half of the nineteenth century—a field as yet almost untouched.

Iowa Journal of History and Politics, July, 1915.

ALUMNI QUARTERLY

The appearance of a volume covering the history of Indiana to 1850 is timely. This volume should, and doubtless will, receive a generous welcome. Whatever may be said of other States, the history of Indiana has been rather sadly neglected. Some excellent work has been done previously on the period before 1816, but Dr. Esarey has produced the first work of historical value on the period from 1816 to 1850. For several years he has been collecting the sources of Indiana History. His sacrifices have been great, but so have been his successes. Indeed, his achievements in this direction have not been approached by those of any one else in the field of Indiana History. It would be difficult to express too high an appreciation of the labors that have preceded and accompanied the writing of the volume under review.

Not only the general reader, however, but also the historian will find the book a source of information for years to come. In the next several years, there should surely appear a number of doctors' theses on the middle period of our State's history, but until these have been worked out, Doctor Esarey's book must be the main reliance for all who can not go directly to the sources.

Of course, no one could produce a local history of such proportions, in a field a part of which has been so thoroughly neglected, without falling into some errors. However, the book appears to be remarkably free from such, and especially from those minor errors that are so difficult to avoid. The statements throughout the book are very clear, the English is good, and nowhere is there any straining after effect. The aim has been to state the facts without prejudice or bias, and this has been accomplished to a surprising degree. The matter presented is well organized.

Professor W. O. Lynch in the *Indiana University Alumni Quarterly*, July, 1915, pp. 346-348.

INDIANA MAGAZINE OF HISTORY

Before the appearance of this sumptuous volume of four hundred and ninety pages, the author had become favorably known as a careful and patient investigator of Indiana history by his papers published in the Indiana Historical Society publications, one entitled *Internal Improvements in Early Indiana*, the other entitled *State Banking in Early Indiana*. By this more ambitious historical venture he will become more widely and favorably known.

The subject chosen by Mr. Esarey presents an inviting theme for the historian, one full of romantic interest, of thrilling adventure, of heroic achievements, of hard struggles with nature and still harder with savage foes, and of marvelous developments.

Mr. Esarey has cultivated a field only partially developed by prior historians. In the portion of his volume which tells the story of the State from 1816-1851, his care and industry and his merits as an historian are conspicuous. In his preparation of it he has rendered a great service to the State and his work will be highly appreciated by all who are interested in preserving its history.

It need not surprise us when we find in the chapter in Mr. Esarey's volume devoted to Religion and Education only six pages about education. These were enough, however, in which to tell what little there is to be told about education in early Indiana. Nor need we be surprised to find that the word “literature” is not mentioned either in the table of contents or in the index of Mr. Esarey's volume. Men whose energies were of necessity devoted mainly to hewing homes out of the wilderness, to providing shelter and food for their families, and to repelling attacks of wild beasts and treacherous foes, had little time in which to read books and less in which to write them. But the early pioneers persevered. They cleared the forests and drained the swamps and converted them into fruitful fields; they made roads and bridges; they built towns and started cities and before 1851 they had laid the foundation of a great commonwealth.

Judge Daniel Wait Howe in the *Indiana Magazine of History*, June, 1915, pages 167-173.

THE NATION

Mr. Esarey's volume is one of the best examples of State history as it ought to be written. The task of the historian in Indiana is even more difficult than in most States, from the fact that there is no considerable collection of historical materials to draw upon. The documentary sources of many commonwealths have been published, but since a short-sighted Legislature half a century ago prevented John B. Dillon from organizing them and from giving Indiana a State library to be proud of, Indiana has been consistently remiss in its attention to such matters. The most important sources, the Indiana State Publications, have not been issued in anything approaching chronological order, and have not been indexed. The Indiana Legislative Records are like those of half the other States: the dates on the back inaccurate, the pagination confused, and the indexes imperfect. As for secondary authorities, J. P. Dunn's excellent volume in the American Commonwealth series is frankly sketchy on the political and military side, and as a social and economic history is preoccupied with the early struggle over slavery and the later fight against pro-slavery sentiment; John Dillon's scholarly work was—again through legislative narrowness—brought down only to 1816, and the work of Goodrich and others is negligible. But Mr. Esarey, whose previous studies on State Banking and Internal Improvements in Indiana have familiarized him with two difficult aspects of its history, has searched every possible source of information, made the closest study of newspapers and manuscripts, and painstakingly verified even statements hitherto unquestioningly accepted. His bibliography contains over three hundred items. The result is a record, brought down to the disappearance of the Whig party and the rise of the Republican, the definitiveness of which is unlikely to be questioned. It is to be hoped that we may some day realize such a history for every State in the Union, supplemented by detailed studies of important topics.

By far the best portion of the book is its treatment of those aspects of State history which are most intricate and difficult, and superficially most repelling. The chapters on Economic Development, covering roads, stage lines, flatboat trade, and mailboat service; on Internal Improvements, tracing the policies which culminated in 1836 with Governor Noble's signature of the Mammoth Internal Improvements bill, appropriating one-sixth of all the wealth the State then had and paving the way straight to bankruptcy; on the Public Lands and the frauds and speculations growing therefrom, on the Second Bank of Indiana, and on Religion and Education leave little to be desired. The agricultural development of the State is hardly spoken of, and should not have been neglected. The fiscal history could also have been treated with more detail. But these general chapters are a refreshing find to any one who knows how exclusively most State historians have dealt with politics, constitutional history, legislative events, and the development of only the salient educational, charitable, penal, and general social institutions. For his account of Indiana banking, for example, the author has gone to the local records of many towns; for the history of the church to the records of the dioceses, parishes, and church districts. Breadth and correctness of view would have been furthered by some aversion to influences outside the State in the ripening of all these phases of Indiana life, but the author's sense of the limitations of his space doubtless prevented this wider treatment.

The matter on general social history would make a small treatise in itself; and in the chapters on The French in Indiana and The Pioneers and their Social Life, the picture of homes, customs, occupations, primitive public utilities, festivals and festivities, is living and interesting. Any reader of Eggleston or of Nicholson's *The Hoosiers* knows that Indiana has its own picturesque qualities of rural life. The charivari, the Christmas shooting, the maltreatment of the schoolmaster, the drinking and gambling, the tavern, the shooting match, the election day, the wedding and infare, the log-rolling, the quilting, the camp-meeting, and the open-handed hospitality of the prairies are described with a wealth of quotations from old chronicles and newspapers. The author justly remarks that the social customs of early Indiana are most clearly understood in the light of their history. One contention of some novelty is that the so-called Hoosier dialect, at the time it was current in Indiana, was that of a large fraction of the population of the whole Union, and represented the language of the commoner of the eighteenth century in England.

The *Nation*, October 21, 1915, pp. 498-499.

INDIANAPOLIS NEWS

Professor Logan Esarey, Ph.D., of Indiana University, where he is instructor in Western History, is the author of "A History of Indiana"—a work that commends itself to students and to readers generally as one of the best works of the sort that has yet appeared on the subject. Moreover, it is a work for which there is genuine need. We have had histories of Indiana—plenty of them, too—but, unfortunately, they have not been without serious faults. In some cases, they have been written by men whose bias colored facts to suit their prejudices and whose opinions have too often been projected as historical data.

These errors, Professor Esarey's history avoids, and, on that account, to say nothing of its other virtues, it will gain a place for itself, no doubt as one of the best and foremost and most reliable books dealing with the subject. It covers Indiana history from the first exploration of the State up to the year 1850, and it covers the period thoroughly, comprehensively and in the manner and style of the genuine historian—not that of the mere compiler. Professor Esarey, in his brief and pointed preface, calls attention to the fact that in the preparation of his work he encountered many serious and unexpected obstacles. "In the first place," says he, "many traditional stories regarded as factual history, have been found to be without historical foundation," a fault we are tempted to add, that is due in large measure to

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He found, too, that the State collection of historical documents is not large, that many of the State reports and publications are wholly unreliable, and that others are not indexed nor even properly bound. It is gratifying to know, however, that the author, in this instance, traced his facts to primary sources and excluded from his text the stupid repetition of erroneous statement that is so often encountered in the histories of Indiana, both early and recent, that have heretofore been available.

As one of the best discussions of the subject we have ever read, we especially recommend the chapter entitled, "Pioneers and their Social Life." This is a plain, dignified, matter-of-fact account of early life and conditions in Indiana, free from speculation and theory, and, on that account, doubly valuable. However, as much could be said of other chapters of the work. It is, in short, admirable from beginning to end—so commendable, in fact, that the reader is led to hope that the author will prepare a companion volume and treat of Indiana's history from 1850 onward.

The *Indianapolis News*, March 22, 1915.

EVANSVILLE COURIER

On the approach of Indiana's centennial, no work could be more timely than "The History of Indiana from Its Exploration to 1850," which has just left the printer's hands. No writer is perhaps so well equipped for the work as the author, Logan Esarey, Ph.D., instructor in Western History in Indiana University. Mr. Esarey, by the way, is a Perry county boy and his family connections throughout Perry and Spencer counties are numerous.

The book will at once step into the position of the leading history of the Hoosier State. It will take first importance, if it does not make all preceding ones obsolete.

The abundance of Dr. Esarey's information is apparent on every page, the accuracy, except in some careless proofreading in the spelling of names, is undoubted. To the many disputed facts of Indiana history he has given a patience and industry that are amazing. He combines the diligence of the investigator with the imagination of the historian. The result is that the book while crowded with facts is not a mere compilation but a genuine history.

Professor Esarey's history is invaluable to the student and it will be eagerly sought by the general reader. Few States outside the original thirteen have had a history so interesting. Its beginnings were laid in romantic adventure and its development was through stirring times. On Indiana soil George Rogers Clark carried out one of the most brilliant exploits of the Revolution. Its borders were touched by the war of 1812 and Hoosier soldiers participated in battles under Taylor and Scott in Mexico. Conflicts with the Indians were frequent.

While Professor Esarey gives due attention to wars and politics and government, he fully describes the life of the people, their habits, customs and social institutions. The book is admirable throughout. It is highly creditable to the author, the university and the State.

From the *Evansville Courier*, April 21, 1915.

BLOOMINGTON WORLD

It is by far the most scholarly history yet written concerning the Hoosier State. Dr. Esarey has brushed aside the numerous stories that have been regarded in many quarters as historical facts, and has written only those things for which the true investigator can vouch.

There is not a single uninteresting page in the book. Dr. Esarey has a genius for sifting the wheat from the chaff and he has a literary style that is pleasing and convincing. His first chapter is naturally devoted to the French in Indiana, and this is followed by an interesting chapter on the English period. He deals intelligently with the Northwest Territory and gives an excellent account of the Territory of Indiana. In regular order he gives a faithful historical record of Indiana as a State.

The book is not a compilation of dry facts, but is a living, breathing account of the life of the people of Indiana. The author traces with accuracy the economic development of the State and deals entertainingly with the religion, the education, the politics and the social life of the Hoosiers. His chapters devoted to Indiana's part in the various wars are based upon recognized historical facts.

Dr. Esarey's volume is a distinct addition to the history of the State, and it is fortunate that the work was in the hands of a real investigator. The volume brings the history to the adoption of the present Constitution in 1851, and it is to be hoped that the author will soon give us one or more volumes that will complete the history to the present time.

Bloomington World, April 29, 1915.

Price \$3.00, postpaid.

Address all communications to LOGAN ESAREY, Bloomington, Indiana.

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